



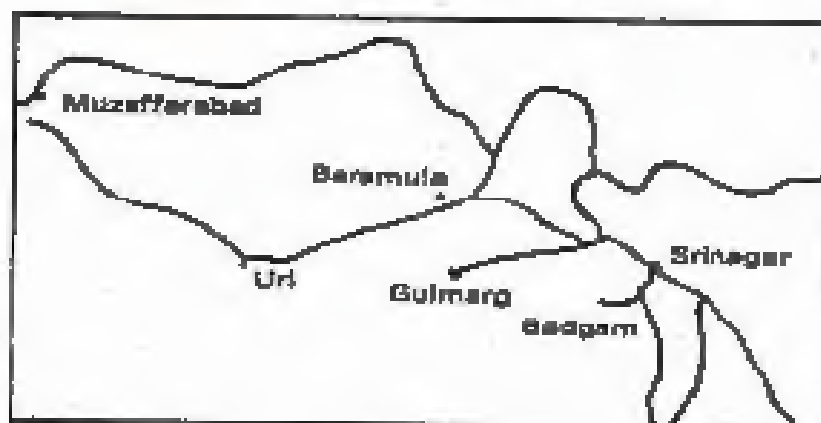
The Battle for Srinagar

THE HEROIC SAGA OF THE
BATTLE FOUGHT IN 1947

The heroic defence of Kashmir against heavy odds in 1947 constitutes a glorious chapter in the annals of the Indian Armed Forces. The country was totally unprepared for such an event. There were shortages of every kind—of men, machines and material. But nothing could deter the indomitable courage and devotion to duty of gallant men like Rajinder Singh, Ranjit Rai, Somnath Sharma and their jawans, whose magnificent actions have been brought to life for the first time in this colourfully illustrated presentation.

For those who read about these undying deeds of valour, there will not only be plenty of thrill and adventure but also a perennial source of inspiration to emulate their example and follow the path of glory.

Map showing the locations of some of the important places that figure in this story



AMAR CHITRA KATHA means good reading.
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Editor : Anant Pai Script : Lt. Col. M. G. Abhyankar Artworks : Ram Wazarkar



THE BATTLE FOR SRINAGAR

IT WAS OCTOBER 1947. CALM AND
QUIET PREVAILED IN SRINAGAR, THE
CAPITAL OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR.

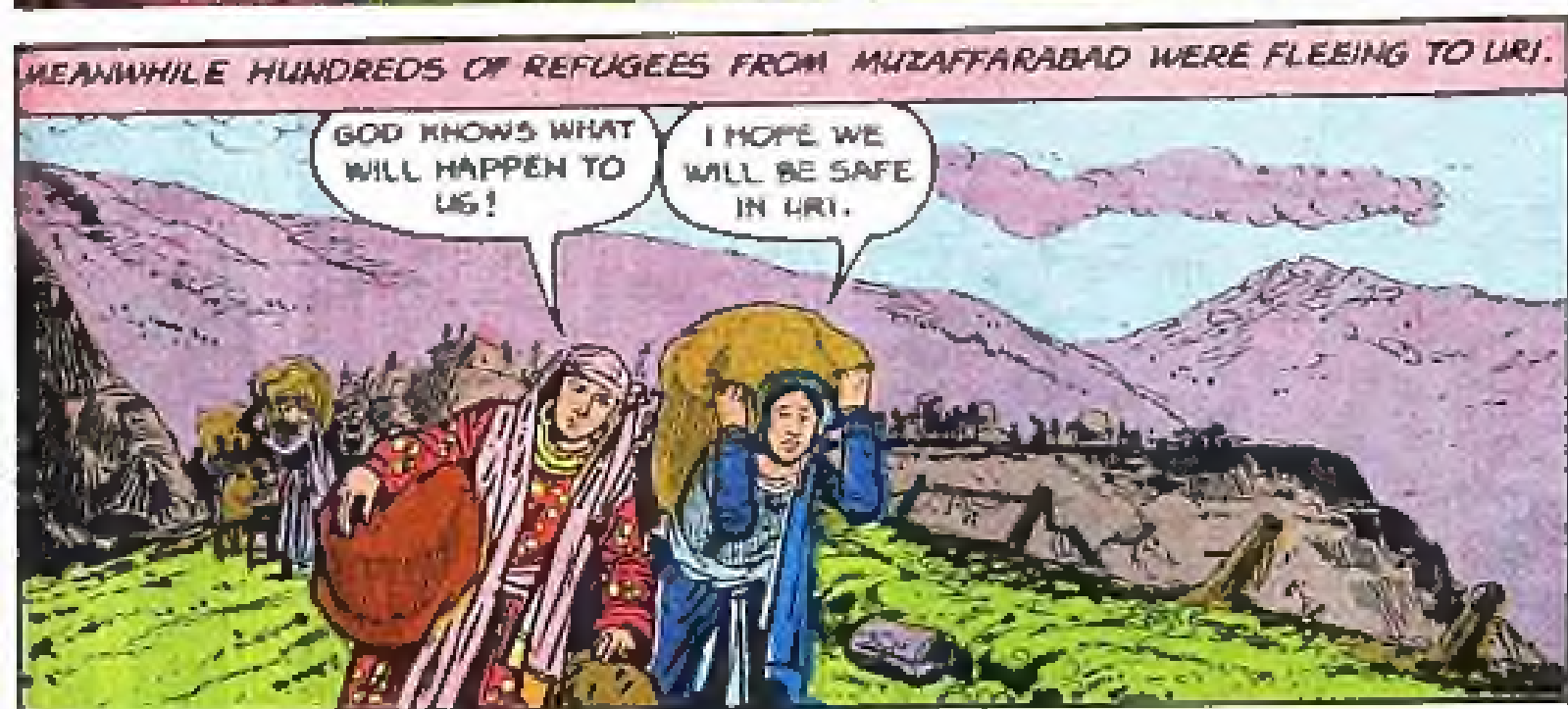
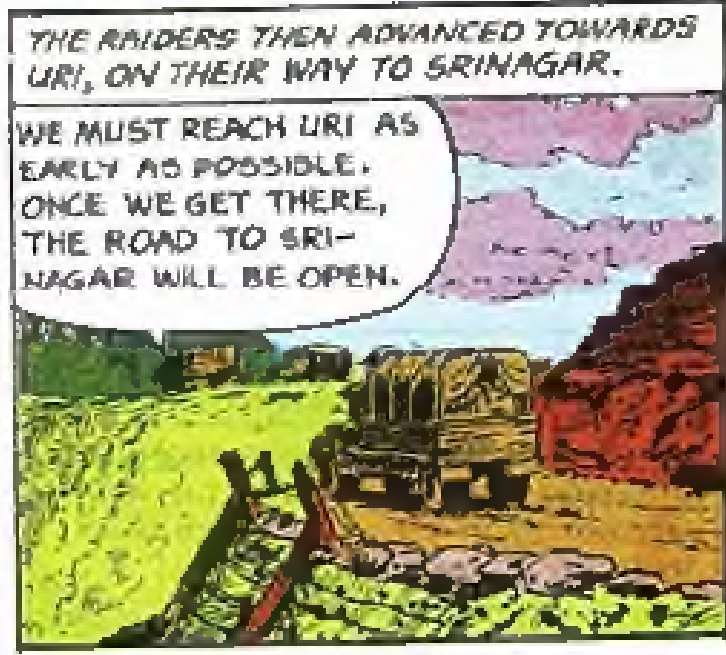
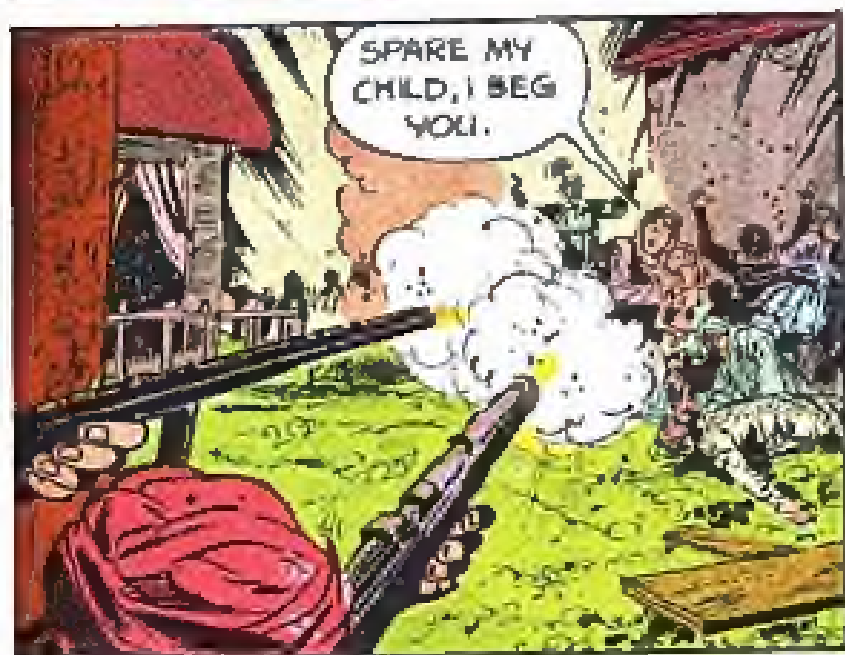
BUT MUZAFFARABAD,
A BORDER TOWN HARDLY
200 KILOMETRES TO THE
WEST, WAS UNDER THE
SHADOW OF AN
IMPENDING
CALAMITY.

I HEAR THAT
A LARGE NUMBER
OF GABAILIES*
ARE CAMPING ACROSS
THE BORDER.
I WONDER WHY?

I BELIEVE
WE ARE GOING
TO BE
ATTACKED.



* TRIBESMEN



WHEN THEY REACHED URI, SOME OF THEM MET THE TEHSILDAR.

SIR, WE HAD TO LEAVE MUZAFFARABAD TO SAVE OUR LIVES. THE QABAILIES HAVE COME.

THE QABAILIES?

THEY'RE POURING IN FROM ACROSS THE BORDER, SIR. THEY ARE COMING IN TRUCKS!

DON'T WORRY. I'LL INFORM SRINAGAR. THE STATE TROOPS WILL BE HERE VERY SOON.

WHEN THE NEWS REACHED THE MAHARAJA IN SRINAGAR —

A VERY SERIOUS SITUATION INDEED! WE MUST STOP THE RAIDERS AT ONCE.

YOUR HIGHNESS, ONLY THE ARMY CAN DO THAT NOW!

BRIG. RAJINDER SINGH, CHIEF OF STAFF, WAS SUMMONED.

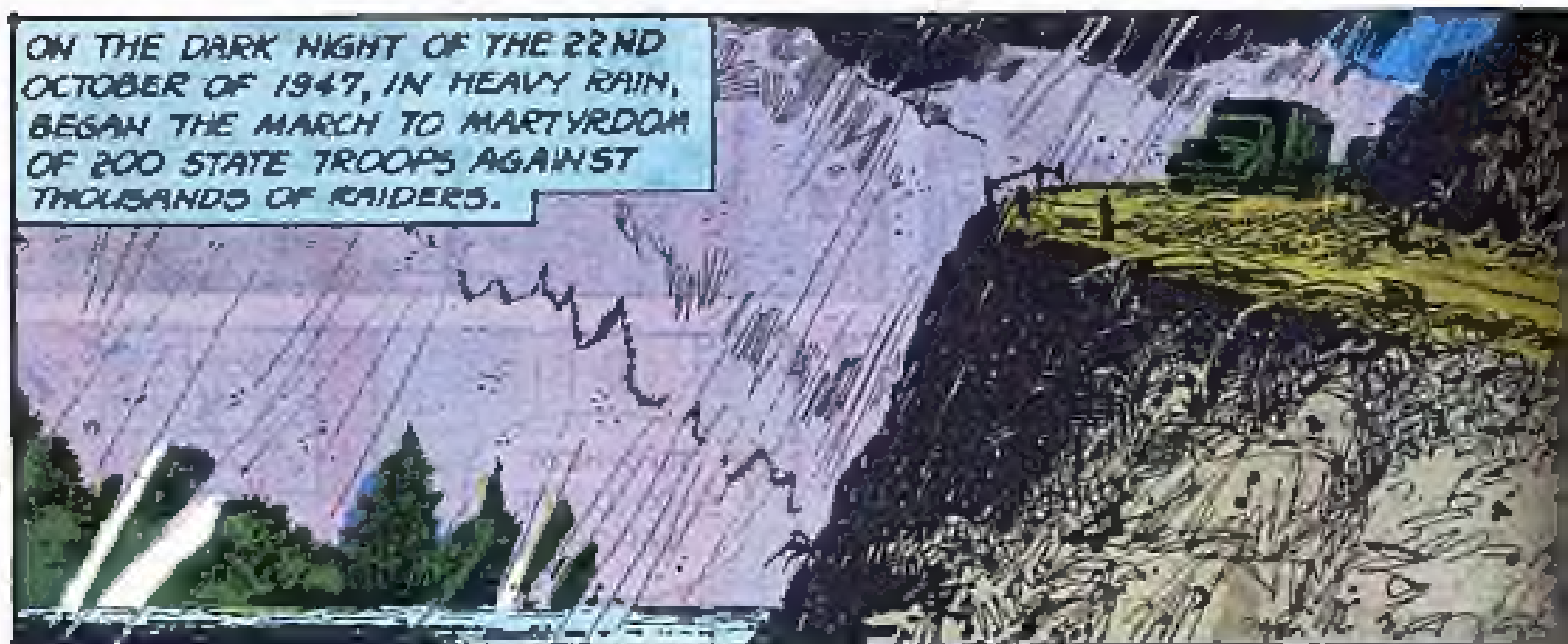
A TERRIBLE CALAMITY, RAJINDER! WHAT CAN WE DO TO HALT THESE RAIDERS?

YOUR HIGHNESS, I HAVE NO TROOPS ON THE URI-SRINAGAR ROAD BUT I WILL TRY TO MUSTER SOME.

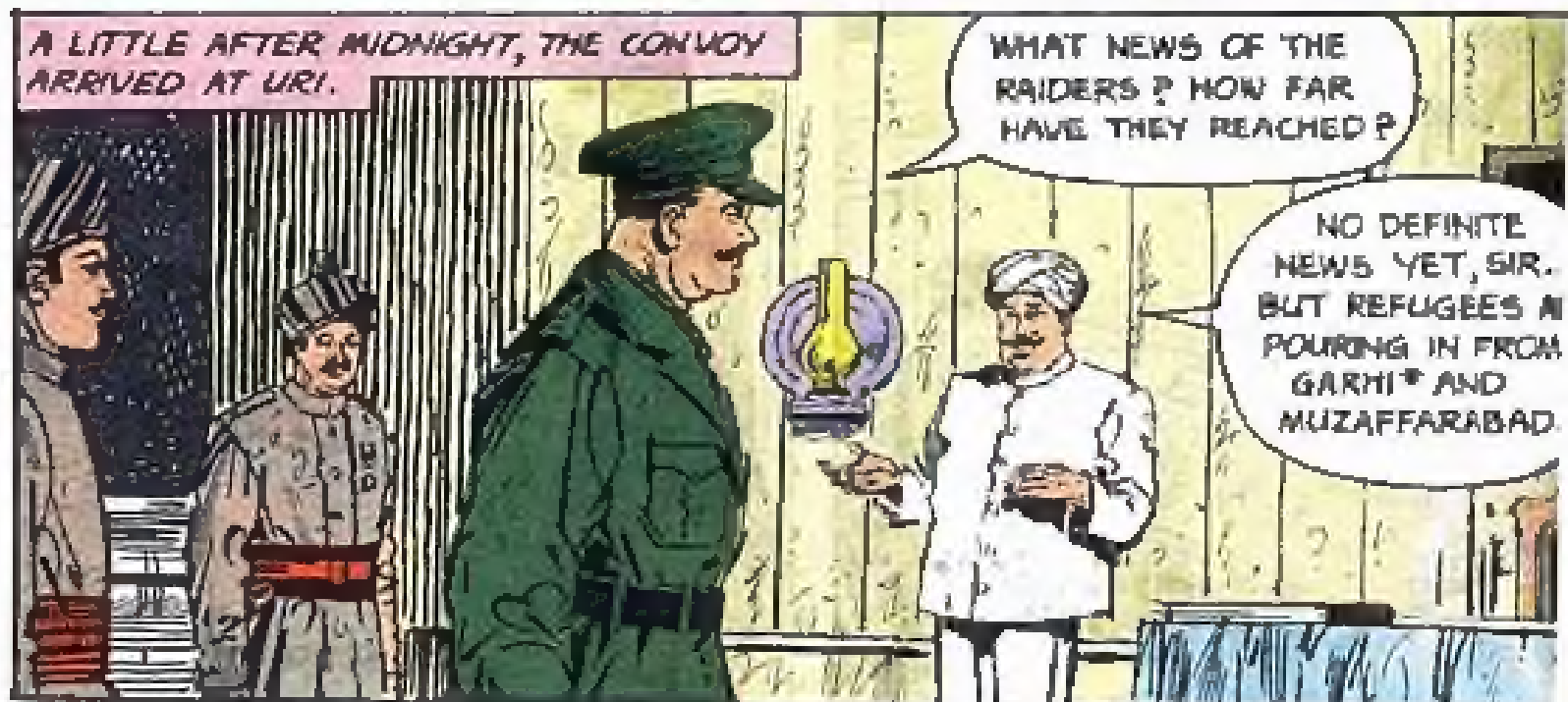




ON THE DARK NIGHT OF THE 22ND OCTOBER OF 1947, IN HEAVY RAIN, BEGAN THE MARCH TO MARTYRDOM OF 200 STATE TROOPS AGAINST THOUSANDS OF RAIDERS.



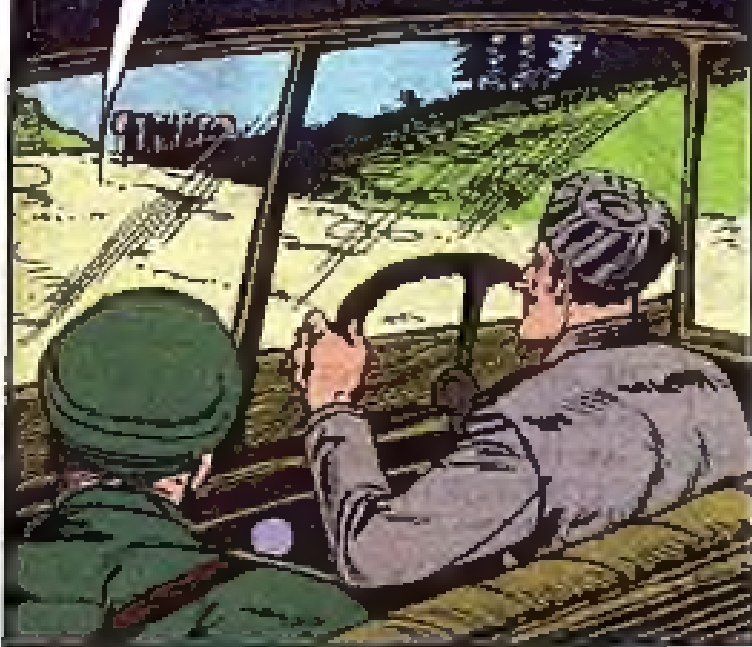
A LITTLE AFTER MIDNIGHT, THE CONVOY ARRIVED AT URI.



* ABOUT 150 KMS. WEST OF SRINAGAR

EARLY NEXT MORNING, THE CONVOY LEFT FOR GARHI.

SLOW DOWN. THOSE MUST BE THE REFUGEES. SWITCH ON THE HEAD LIGHTS.



ARE YOU COMING FROM GARHI? WHERE ARE THE QABAILIES?

WE LEFT GARHI AT NIGHT. THE RAIDERS WERE EXPECTED THERE AT ANY MOMENT.



AS THE CONVOY PICKED UP SPEED —

THEY ARE COMING IN THOUSANDS, SIR. TAKE CARE.

DON'T WORRY. WE'LL THROW THEM OUT.



THE CONVOY APPROACHED GARHI AND —

ENEMY! HALT THE VEHICLES. TAKE COVER AND FIRE.



THE RAIDERS WERE IN HIGH SPIRITS.

OH, THESE MUST BE THE STATE TROOPS! FINISH THEM OFF.



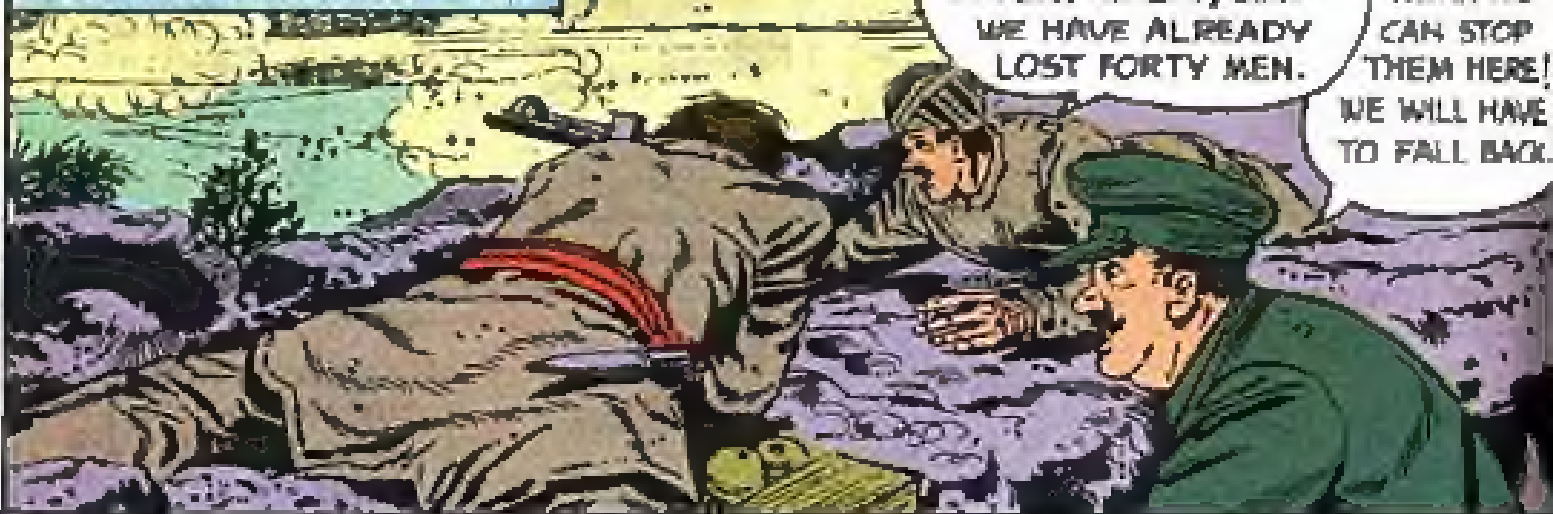
A DEADLY ENCOUNTER BEGAN.



AN OFFICER DIVED UNDER COVER AS A BULLET WHIZZED PAST HIM.

THE ENEMY STRENGTH IS VERY GREAT, SIR. WE HAVE ALREADY LOST FORTY MEN.

I DON'T THINK WE CAN STOP THEM HERE! WE WILL HAVE TO FALL BACK.



RAJINDER SINGH AND HIS MEN WITHDREW TO URI.

A WIRELESS MESSAGE HAS JUST COME IN, SIR. TWO MORTARS AND TWO M.M.G.'S ARE ON THEIR WAY HERE FROM SRINAGAR.

VERY GOOD! NOW I CAN GIVE THE RAIDERS A HOT RECEPTION WHEN THEY COME.



RAJINDER SINGH MADE HIS PLANS TO MEET THE RAIDERS.

TELL THE DEMOLITION PARTY TO PREPARE TO BLOW UP THE BRIDGE.



THE DEMOLITION SQUAD SET
TO WORK.



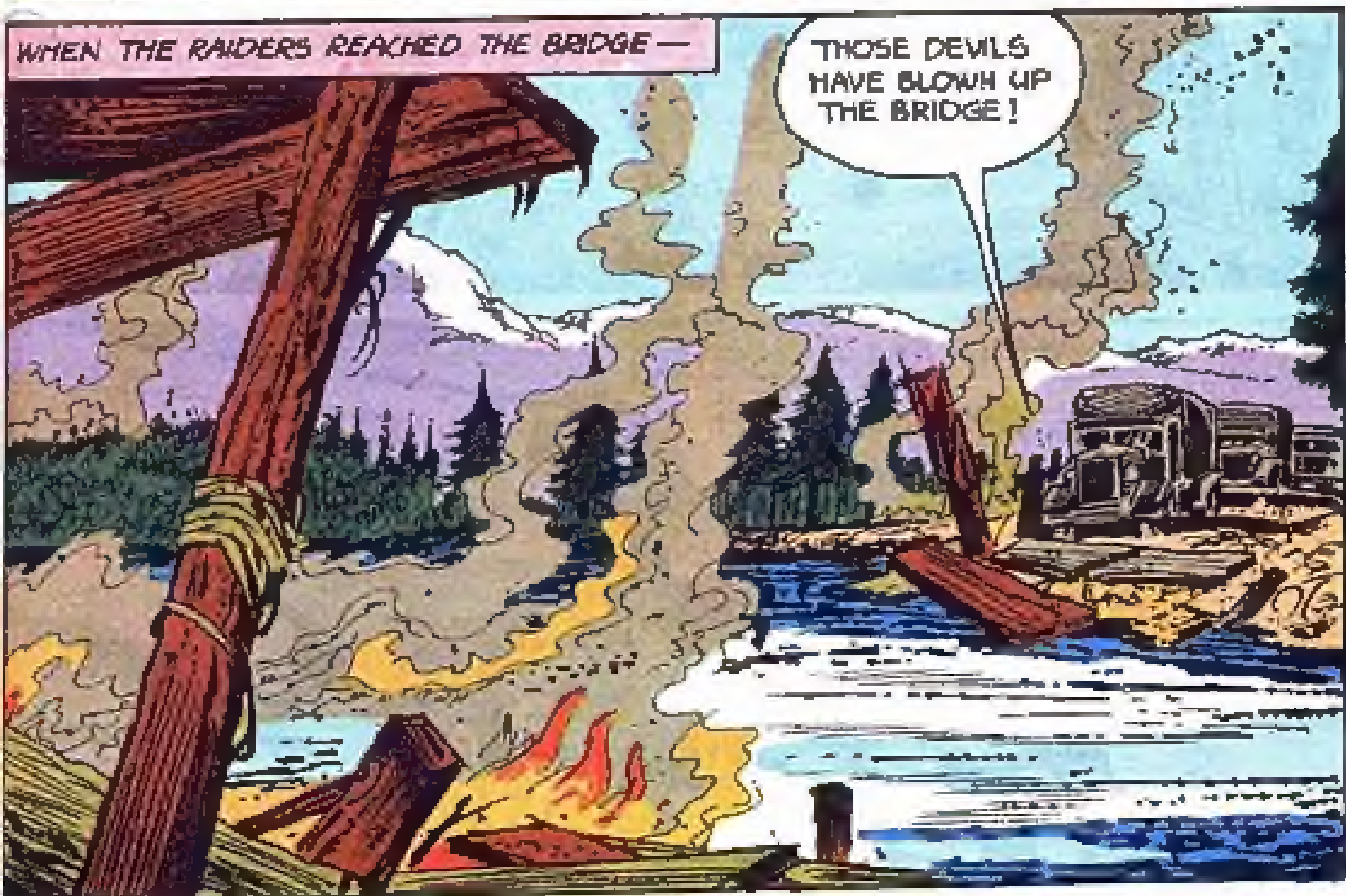
MEANWHILE, THE RAIDERS
WERE FAST ADVANCING
ON URI.

ONCE WE
CROSS THE URI
NULLAH * SRI-
NAGAR WILL
BE OURS.



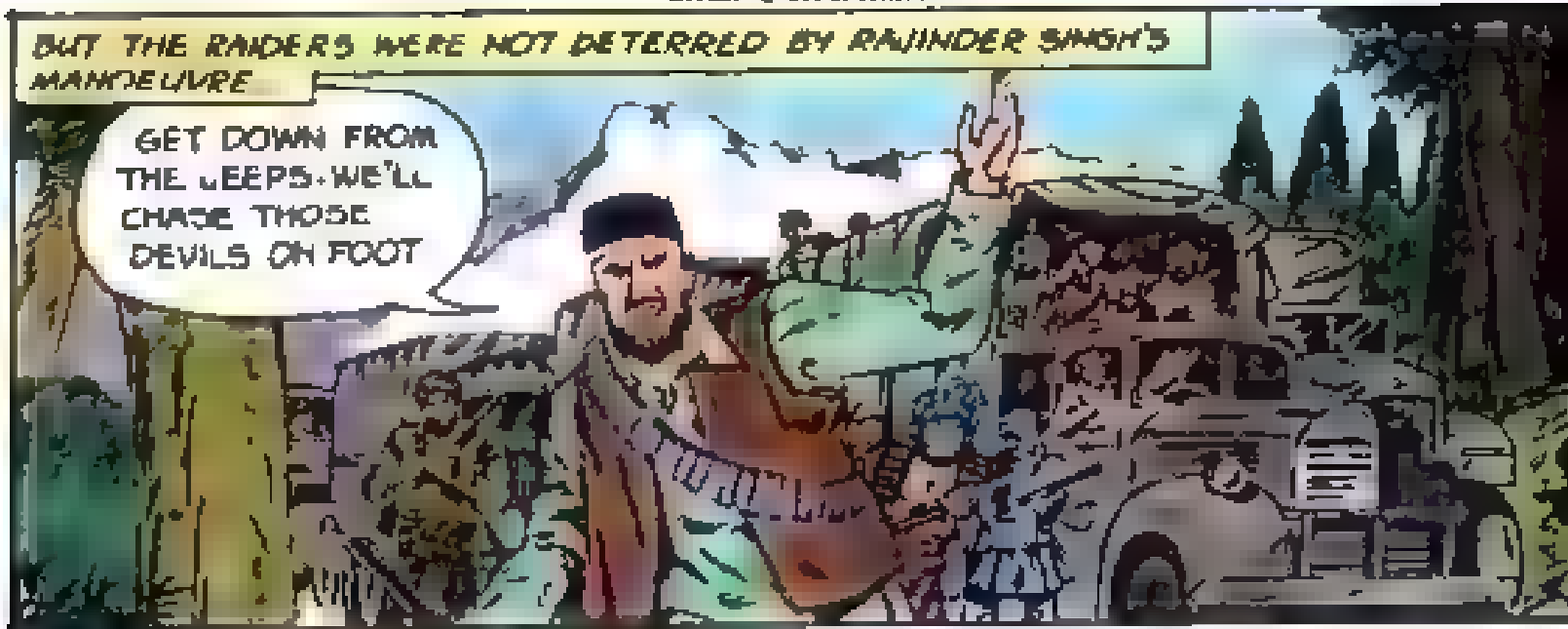
WHEN THE RAIDERS REACHED THE BRIDGE —

THOSE DEVILS
HAVE BLOWN UP
THE BRIDGE!

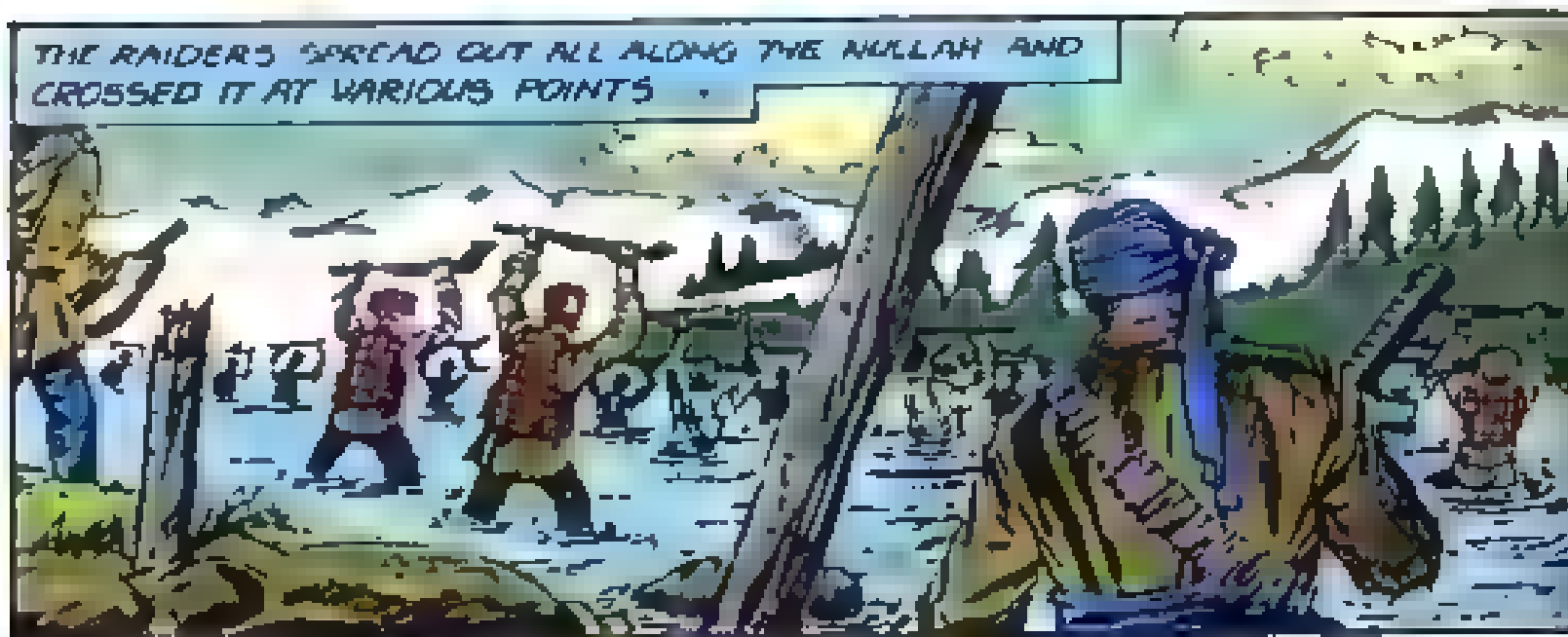


BUT THE RAIDERS WERE NOT DETERRED BY RAJINDER SINGH'S
MANOEUVRE

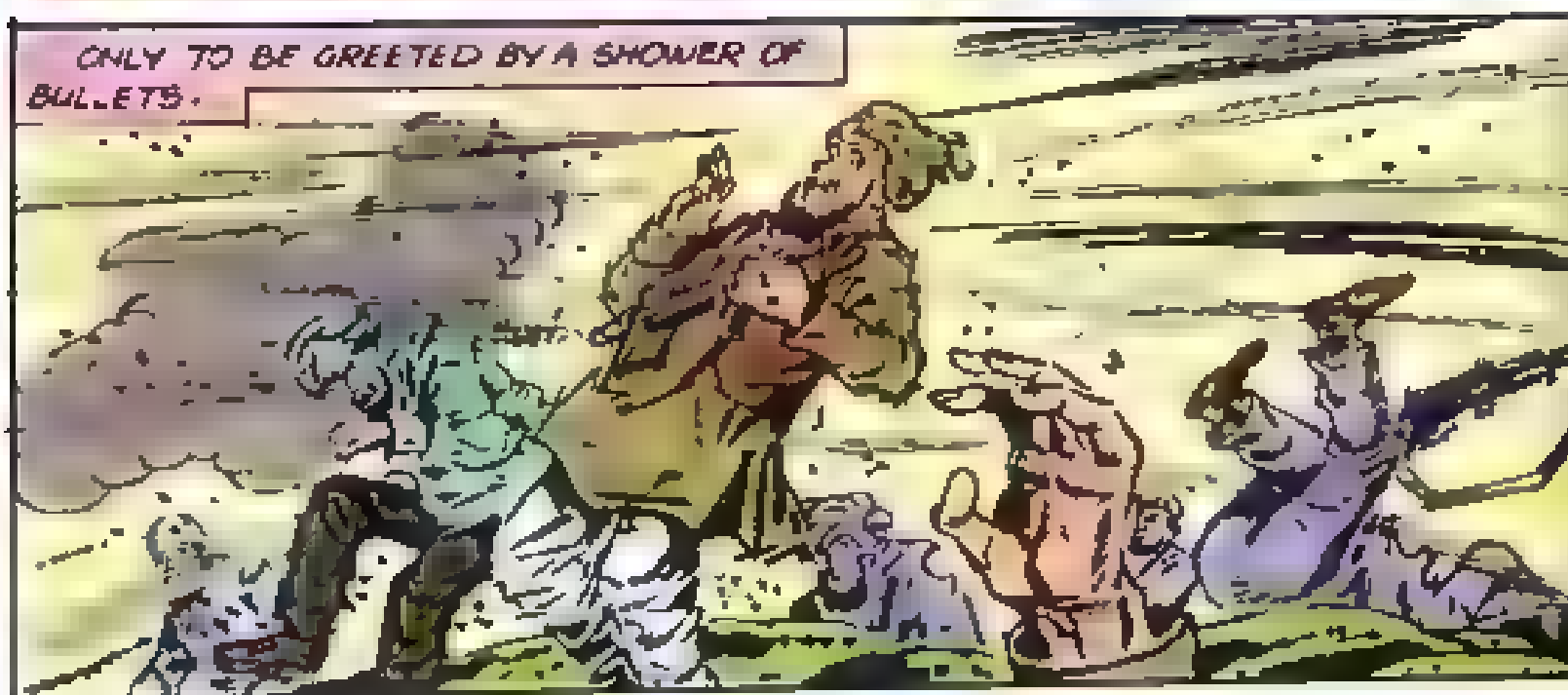
GET DOWN FROM
THE JEEPS. WE'LL
CHASE THOSE
DEVILS ON FOOT



THE RAIDERS SPREAD OUT ALL ALONG THE NULLAH AND
CROSSED IT AT VARIOUS POINTS



ONLY TO BE GREETED BY A SHOWER OF
BULLETS.



DESPITE THEIR SMALL NUMBERS,
THE DETERMINED KASHMIR
TROOPS TOOK A HEAVY TOLL
OF THE RAIDERS



AFTER BITTER FIGHTING THROUGH-
OUT THE DAY —



SIXTY MORE
MEN — SOME
KILLED, SOME
WOUNDED — ARE
OUT OF COMBAT,
SIR.

WELL, PASS
A MESSAGE
ROUND THAT WE
WILL WITHDRAW
TO BUNYAR
DURING THE
NIGHT.

ON REACHING BUNYAR, DEFENCES WERE
ORGANISED FROM LATE NIGHT TO EARLY
MORNING.

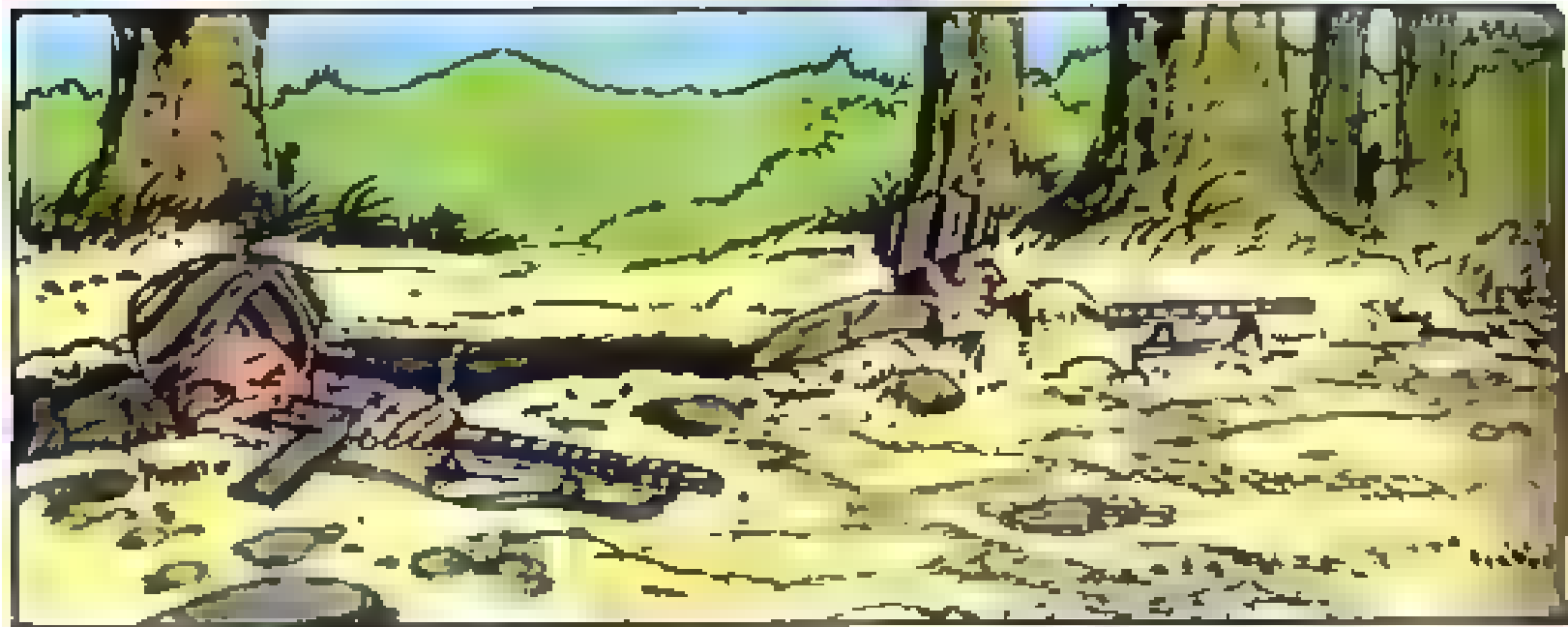


OUR MACHINE GUNS
AND MORTARS MUST
INFLECT THE MAXIMUM
DAMAGE.

TRENCHES WERE DUG
AND MACHINE GUNS
WERE MOUNTED.



MAKE NO MOVEMENT
AND DO NOT OPEN
FIRE TILL THEY COME
WITHIN RANGE.

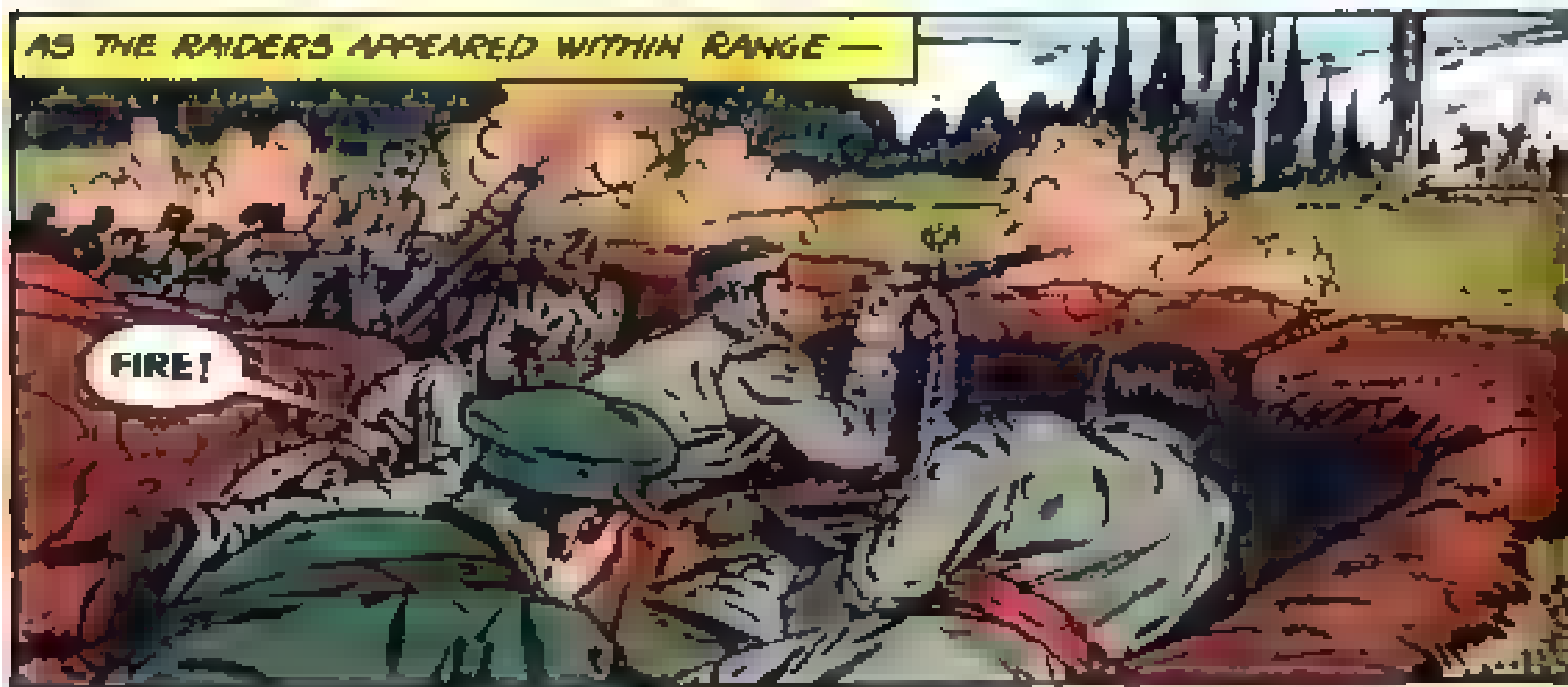


SINCE THE BRIDGE HAD BEEN BLOWN UP THE RAIDERS COULD NOT USE THEIR VEHICLES AND WERE SLOW TO ARRIVE.

COME ON!
LET US GO FORWARD. WE ARE STILL FAR AWAY FROM SRINAGAR

AS THE RAIDERS APPEARED WITHIN RANGE —

FIRE!





IT IS IMPOSSIBLE
TO ADVANCE! THE
MORTAR AND
MACHINE GUN FIRE
IS HOLDING US
UP.

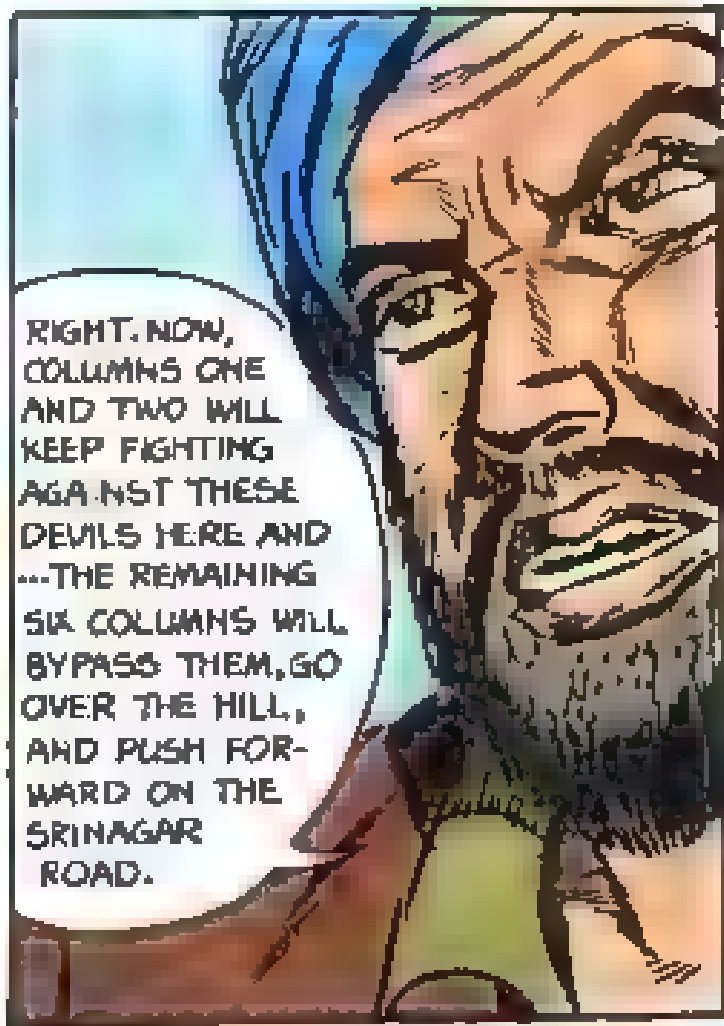
WHAT HAPPENED
TO OUR MORTARS?
WHERE ARE THEY?



THEY ARE IN THE
TRUCKS! TILL
THE BRIDGE IS
REPAIRED, THE
TRUCKS CAN'T
MOVE.

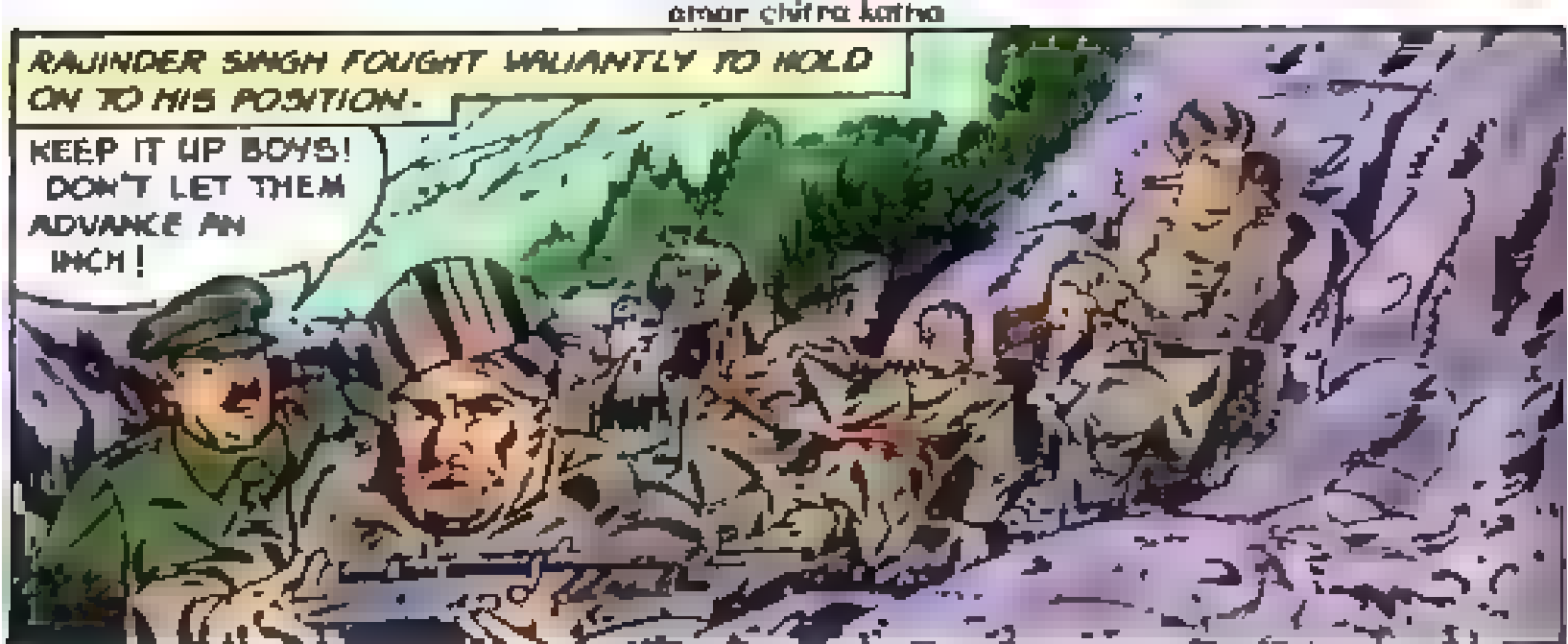
WELL, SOMETHING
MUST BE DONE.
WE CAN'T JUST
HANG ABOUT
LIKE THIS!

RIGHT. NOW,
COLUMNS ONE
AND TWO WILL
KEEP FIGHTING
AGAINST THESE
DEVILS HERE AND
---THE REMAINING
SIX COLUMNS WILL
BYPASS THEM, GO
OVER THE HILL,
AND PUSH FOR-
WARD ON THE
SRINAGAR
ROAD.

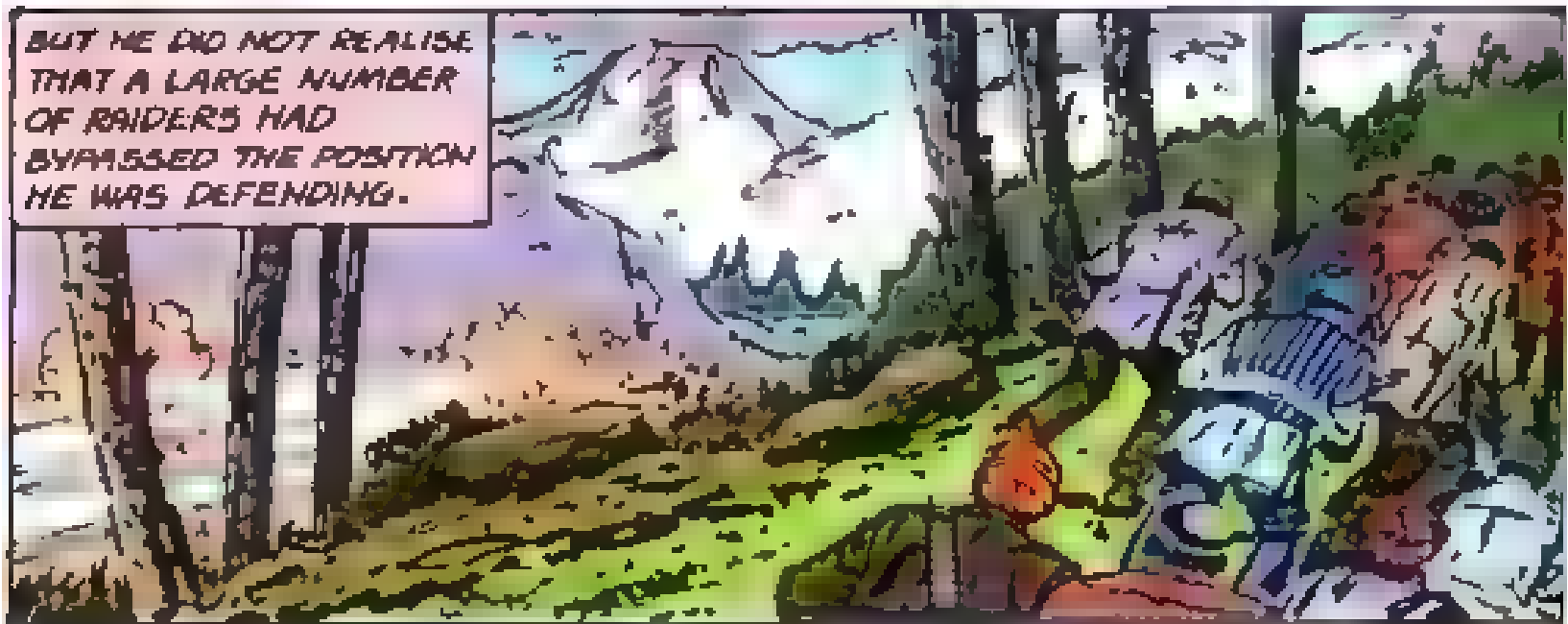


RAJINDER SINGH FOUGHT VAUANTLY TO HOLD ON TO HIS POSITION.

KEEP IT UP BOYS!
DON'T LET THEM
ADVANCE AN
INCH!



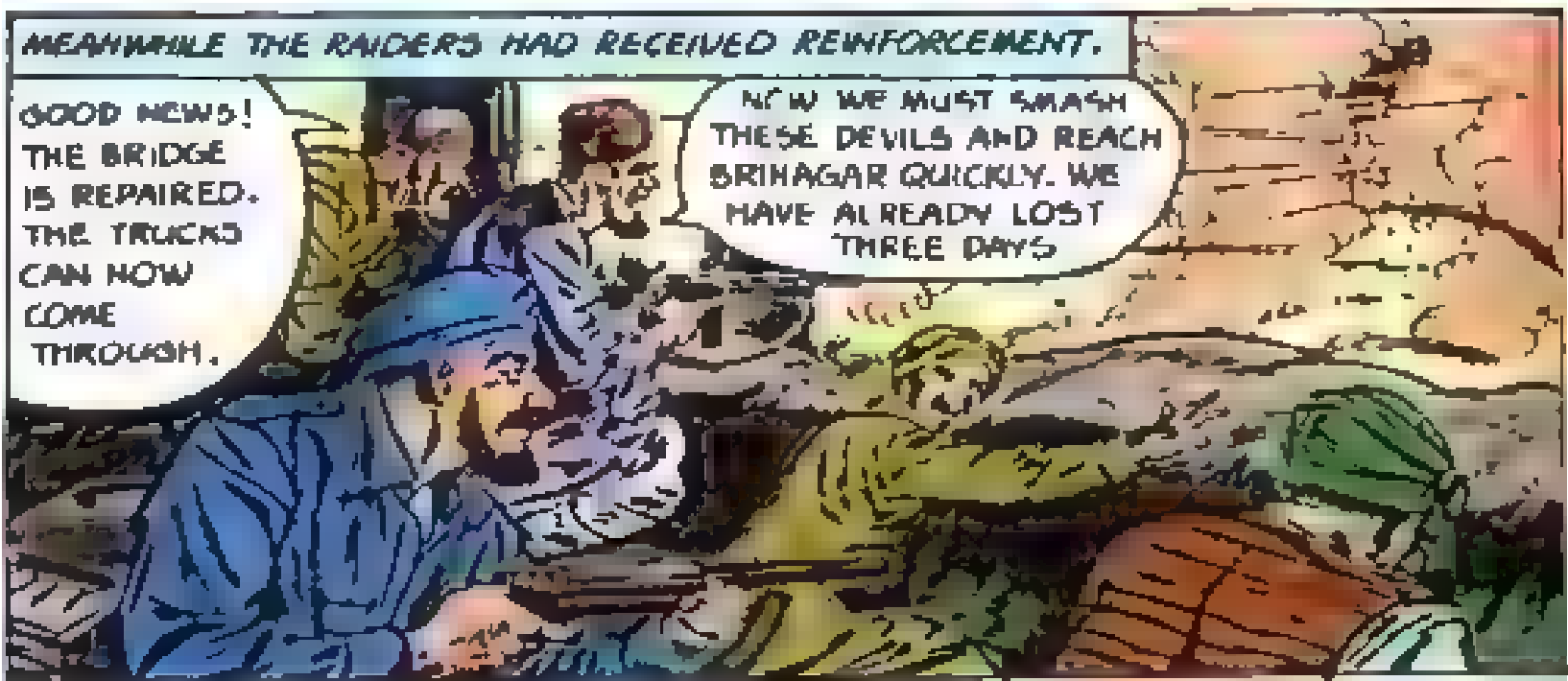
BUT HE DID NOT REALISE
THAT A LARGE NUMBER
OF RAIDERS HAD
BYPASSED THE POSITION
HE WAS DEFENDING.



MEANWHILE THE RAIDERS HAD RECEIVED REINFORCEMENT.

GOOD NEWS!
THE BRIDGE
IS REPAIRED.
THE TRUCKS
CAN NOW
COME
THROUGH.

NOW WE MUST SMASH
THESE DEVILS AND REACH
SRINAGAR QUICKLY. WE
HAVE ALREADY LOST
THREE DAYS



THE SITUATION WAS NOT ROSY FOR RAJINDER SINGH.

WE ARE RUNNING SHORT OF FOOD AND AMMUNITION, SIR.

AND TWENTY MORE MEN HAVE BEEN WOUNDED.

AFTER FIVE DAYS OF NON-STOP MOVES, COUNTER MOVES AND DEADLY FIGHTING, BRIG. RAJINDER SINGH WAS AGAIN FORCED TO WITHDRAW WITH HIS REMAINING TROOPS.

WHAT TIME SHALL WE START MOVING OUT?

SOON AFTER 1-00 A.M. AND THEN WE GO BACK, STRAIGHT TO BARAMULA.*

BUT THE RAIDERS HAD FOREBIDDEN RAJINDER SINGH'S NEXT MOVE.

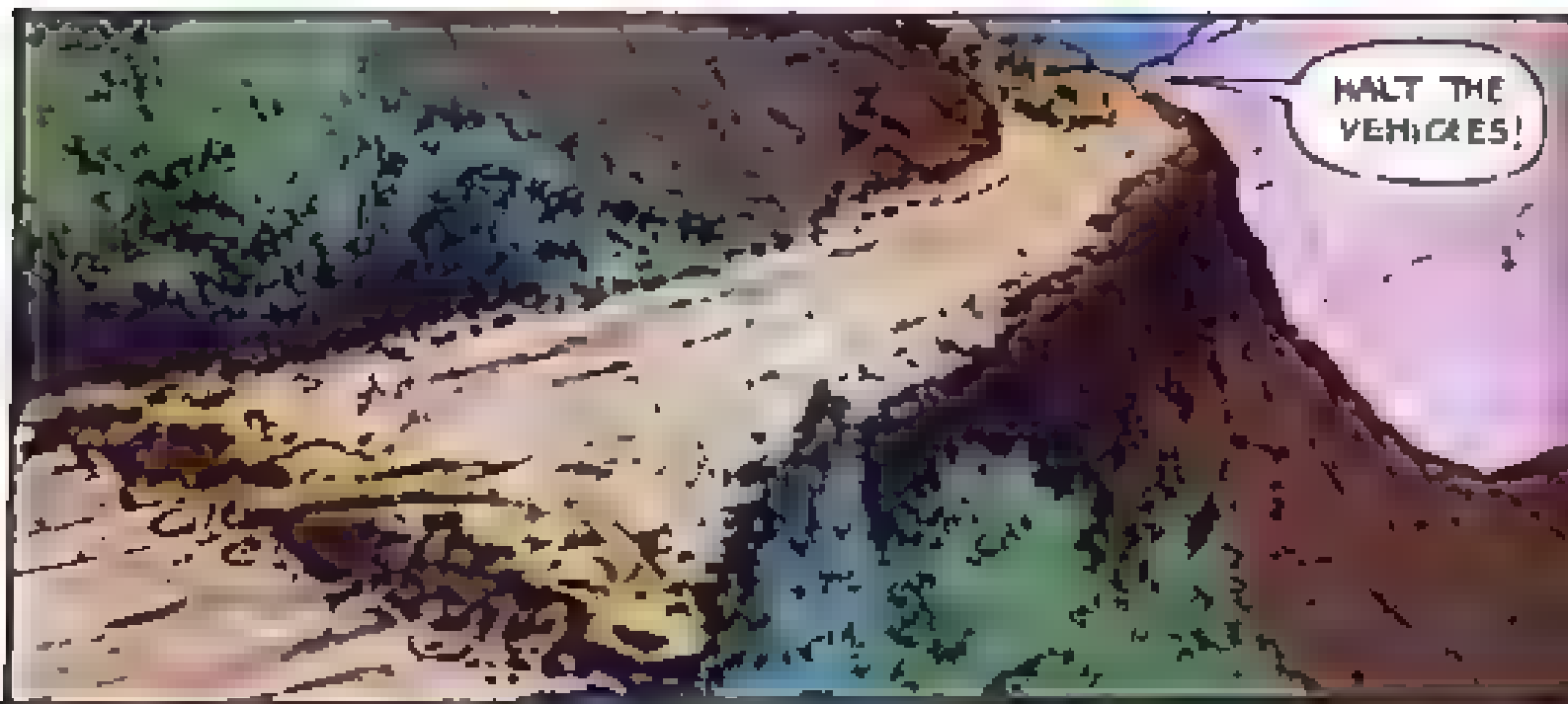
IF WE ARE NOT QUICK, THESE WILY FELLOWS WILL SLIP AWAY

SEND A MESSAGE TO THE FORWARD COLUMNS TO LAY A ROAD BLOCK ON THEIR ROUTE OF WITHDRAWAL AND TO AMBUSH THEM.

AT 2-00 A.M., RAJINDER
AND HIS MEN GOT INTO
THE TRUCKS AND
STARTED THEIR
FATEFUL WITHDRAWAL.



HALT THE
VEHICLES!



WE HAVE BEEN
AMBUSHED!
TAKE COVER!



BUT AS THEY JUMPED DOWN FROM THE TRUCKS THEY WERE GREETED BY A VOLLEY OF AIR, ART AND SHELLS



BRIG RAJINDER SINGH WAS HIT IN THE CHEST AND BOTH HIS LEGS WERE FRACTURED, YET HE SCRAMBLED INTO THE TRUCK

MOST OF THE DRIVERS ARE KILLED. SHALL WE DIG UP POSITIONS HERE?

NO! NOW IT WOULD BE SUICIDAL! WE MUST LEAVE. I WILL DRIVE THIS TRUCK.



OH, HE IS COLLAPSING! LET US TAKE HIM AWAY TO A SAFE PLACE.



THE RAIDERS WERE NOW JUBILANT.

I THINK WE
HAVE WOUNDED
THE R COMMANDER
GOOD SHOW!

NOW, CHARGE
LIKE FURY!
LET US FINISH
THEM OFF.

MEANWHILE RAJINDER WAS TAKEN
TO DINAN HANDEL.

WE SHALL HOLD OFF
THE ENEMY. YOU MUST
GO BACK TO SABA-
MULA HOSPITAL

DON'T WORRY
ABOUT ME GO
OUT AND DESTROY
THE ENEMY KASHMIR
MUST BE SAVED.
I HAVE DONE MY
DUTY.

SOON HE BREATHED HIS LAST

HIS SACRIFICE
WILL NOT BE IN
VAIN!

THERE WAS NO TIME EVEN TO SHED TEARS
FOR THE VALIANT LEADER THE RAIDERS
HAD TO BE CONTAINED. RAJINDER'S MEN
FIGHTED FIERCELY AND MANY OF THEM
WERE KILLED.

ON TO SRINAGAR!
NO MORE OBSTAC-
LES ON THE WAY
NOW!

AT WAKHRA ON THEIR ROUTE, THE RAIDERS SET THE POWER STATION ON FIRE.



SRINAGAR WILL BE IN DARKNESS WHEN WE GET THERE — AND THAT WILL SUIT US!

WHEN THEY REACHED BARAMULLA —



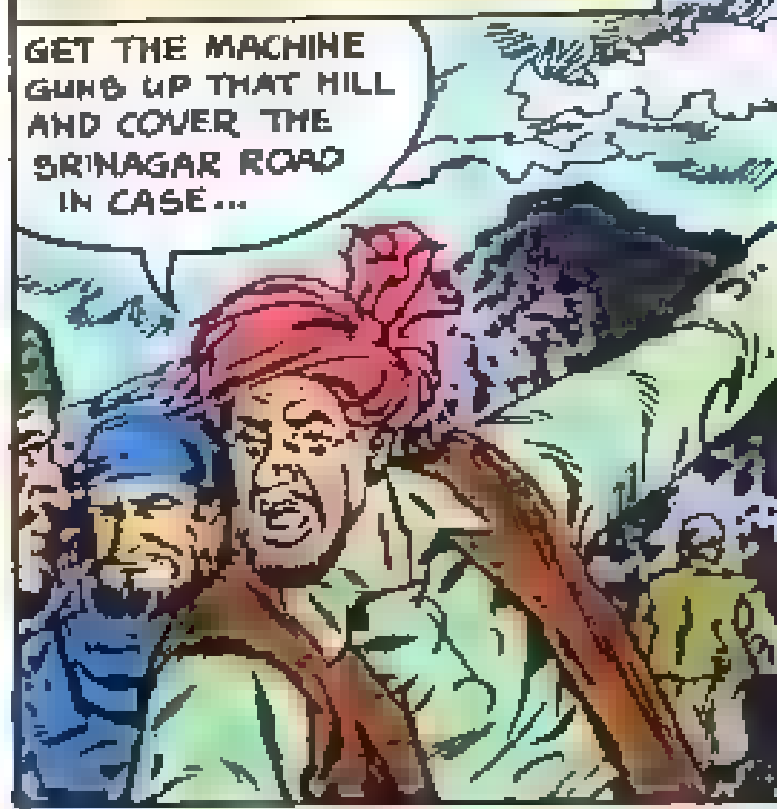
THIS IS PARADISE! PLENTY OF SCOPE FOR LOOT AND FLUNDER! GO ALL OUT!

THEY DID NOT SPARE EVEN THE NUNS LIVING PEACEFULLY IN A CONVENT NEAR BY

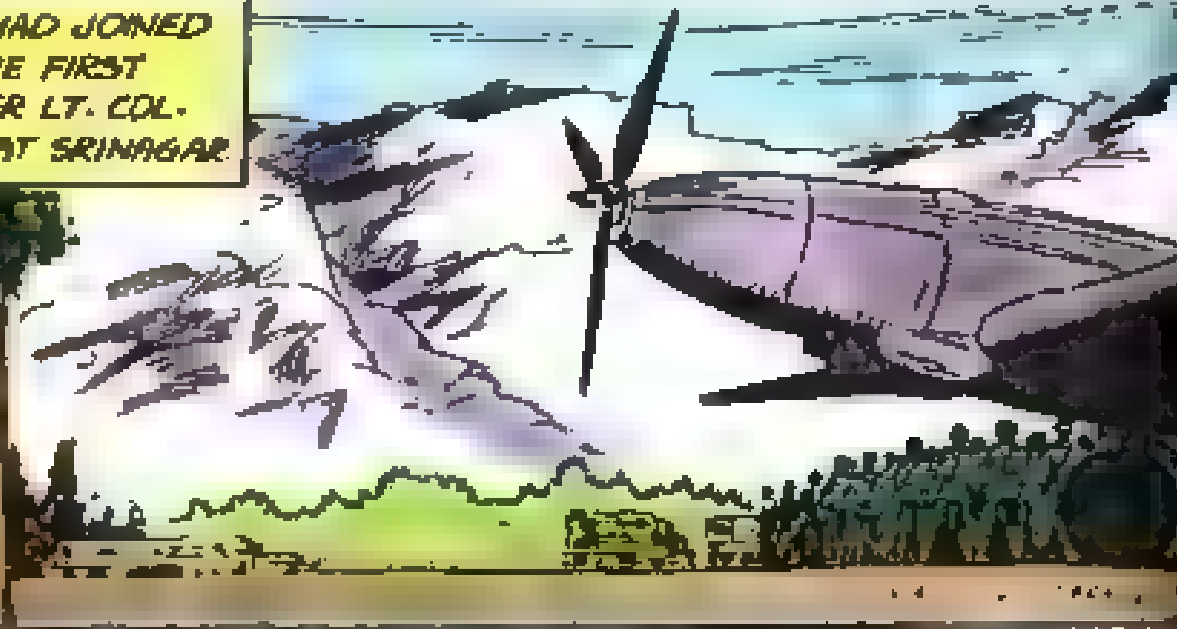


WHILE THE LOOTING WAS ON —

GET THE MACHINE GUNS UP THAT HILL AND COVER THE SRINAGAR ROAD IN CASE...



MEANWHILE KASHMIR HAD JOINED THE INDIAN UNION. THE FIRST SIKH BATTALION UNDER LT. COL. RANJIT RAI LANDED AT SRINAGAR.



SOON AFTER LANDING —

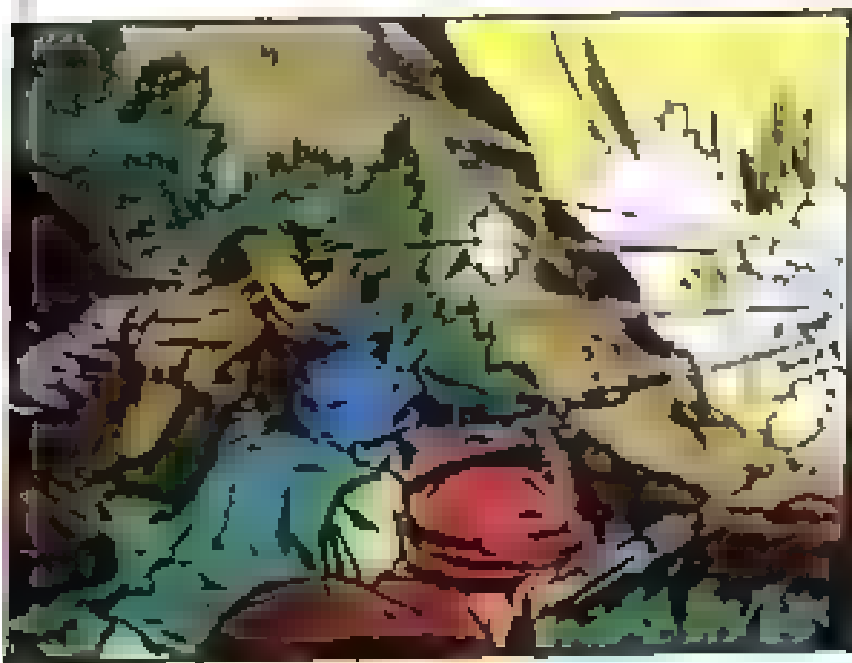
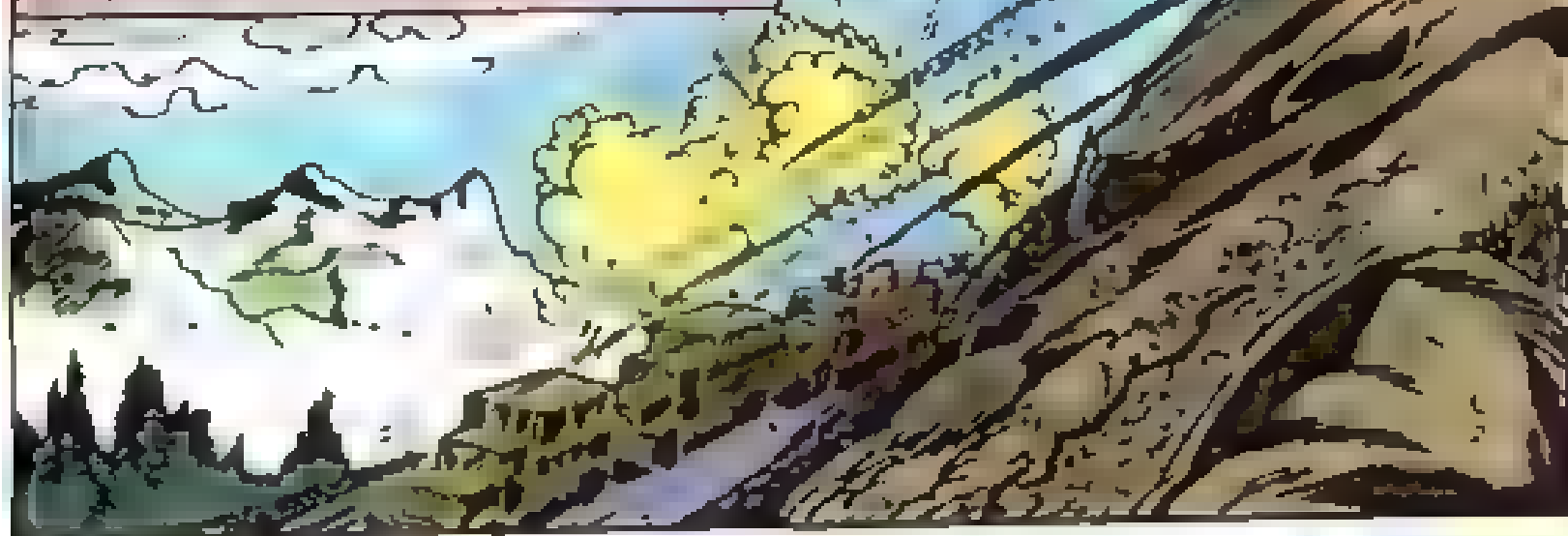
WE MUST DASH OFF TO BARAMULA BEFORE THE RAIDERS GET THERE.



LEAVING A COMPANY BEHIND TO DEFEND THE AIRFIELD, LT. COL. RAI MOVED ON TO BARAMULA.



BUT SOON THEY WERE THE TARGET OF HEAVY FIRING FROM THE TOP OF A HILL.



RAI WAS HIT BY A BULLET AND FELL.



MAJOR BACHAN SINGH TOOK OVER COMMAND AND LED HIS COMPANIES SAFELY TO PATTAN.*



THE RAIDERS WILL BE HERE SOON. USE EVERY MAN ON THE DEFENCES. AND ASK THE COMPANY DETAINED AT THE AIRFIELD TO JOIN US HERE

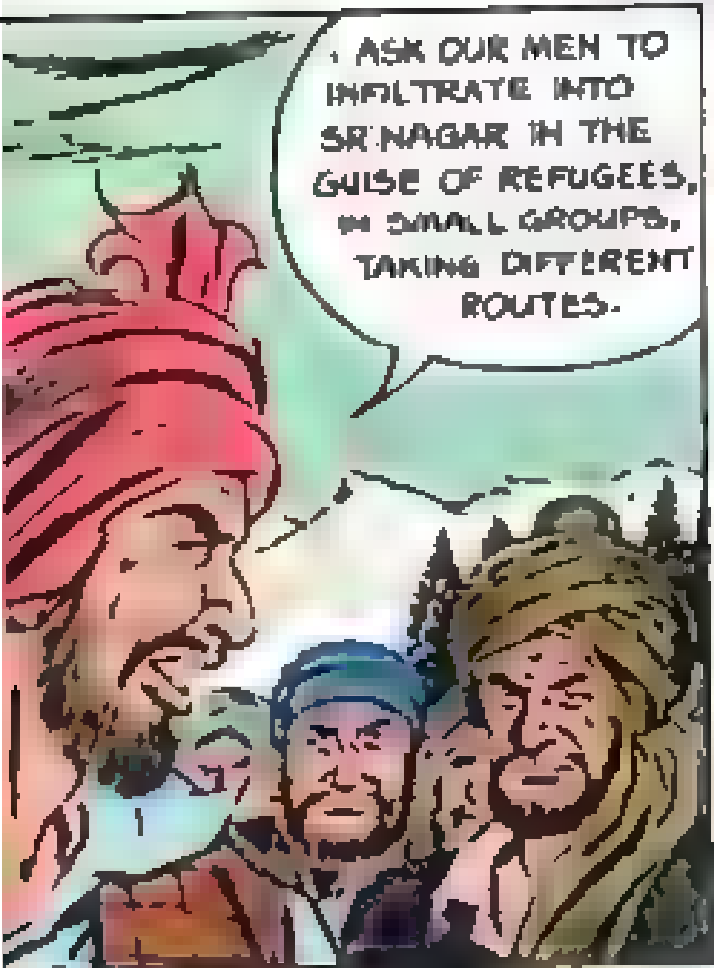
HERE THEY COME!
SAT BE AKA! NOW
LET OUR MMS
AND MORTARS
SPIT FIRE

THE GUNS AND MORTARS TOOK A HEAVY TOLL OF THE RAIDERS...

WHO WITHHEW AND HELD HURRIED
CONSULTATIONS.

THE INDIAN TROOPS
SEEM TO BE HERE IN FULL
STRENGTH WE CAN'T GO
PAST THEM TO SRI-
NAGAR

CAN'T WE PASS
THEM DISGUISED
AS REFUGEES?



ASK OUR MEN TO INFILTRATE INTO SRINAGAR IN THE GUISE OF REFUGEES, IN SMALL GROUPS, TAKING DIFFERENT ROUTES.



THE DISGUISED RAIDERS BEGAN TO ARRIVE IN SRINAGAR.

WILL THEY SUSPECT US?

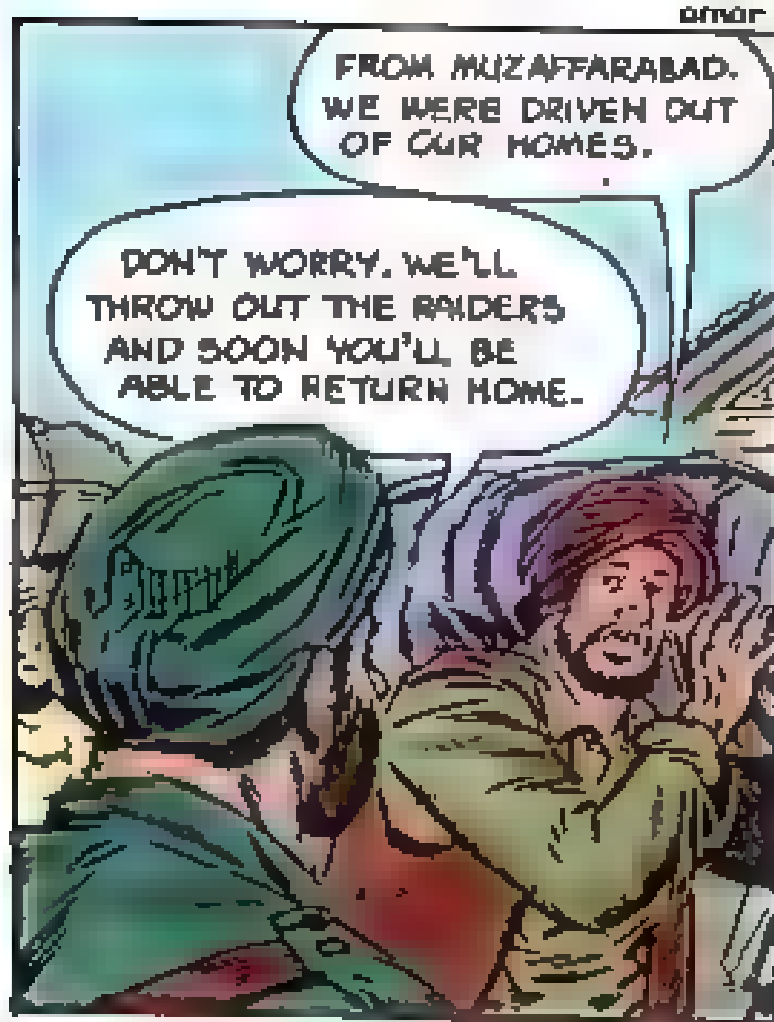
BE NATURAL AND NORMAL.



BUT THEIR FEARS WERE SOON DISPELLED

DON'T BE AFRAID, BROTHERS. YOU ARE IN SRINAGAR NOW.

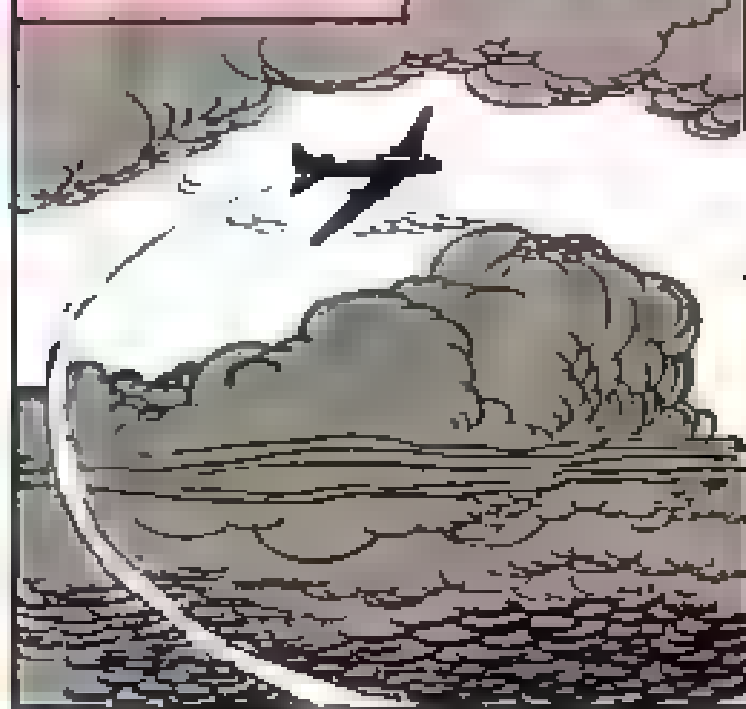
WHERE ARE YOU FROM?



MAJOR SHARMA WAS ONE OF THE FIRST TO BOARD THE PLANE ...



... FOR SRINAGAR.



LATER WHEN HE REPORTED TO BRIG. L.P. SEN, THE OFFICER IN COMMAND OF THE OPERATIONS—

I AM WORRIED ABOUT THE SECURITY OF BADGAM AIRFIELD, MAJ. SHARMA.



I WANT YOU AND RONNIE WOOD* TO MOVE WITH YOUR MEN FROM OPPOSITE DIRECTIONS, AND MAKE A THOROUGH COMB-OUT OF BADGAM. IF YOU SEE ANY SIGN OF RAIDERS, REPORT AT ONCE.



* OFFICER IN CHARGE OF ANOTHER COMPANY

SHARMA AND HIS MEN
APPROACHED BADGAM
FROM THE SOUTH,
SEARCHING FOR
RAIDERS



LATER THEY WERE
MET BY RONNIE
WOOD'S GROUP
WHICH HAD SEARCHED
THROUGH
BADGAM FROM
THE NORTH.

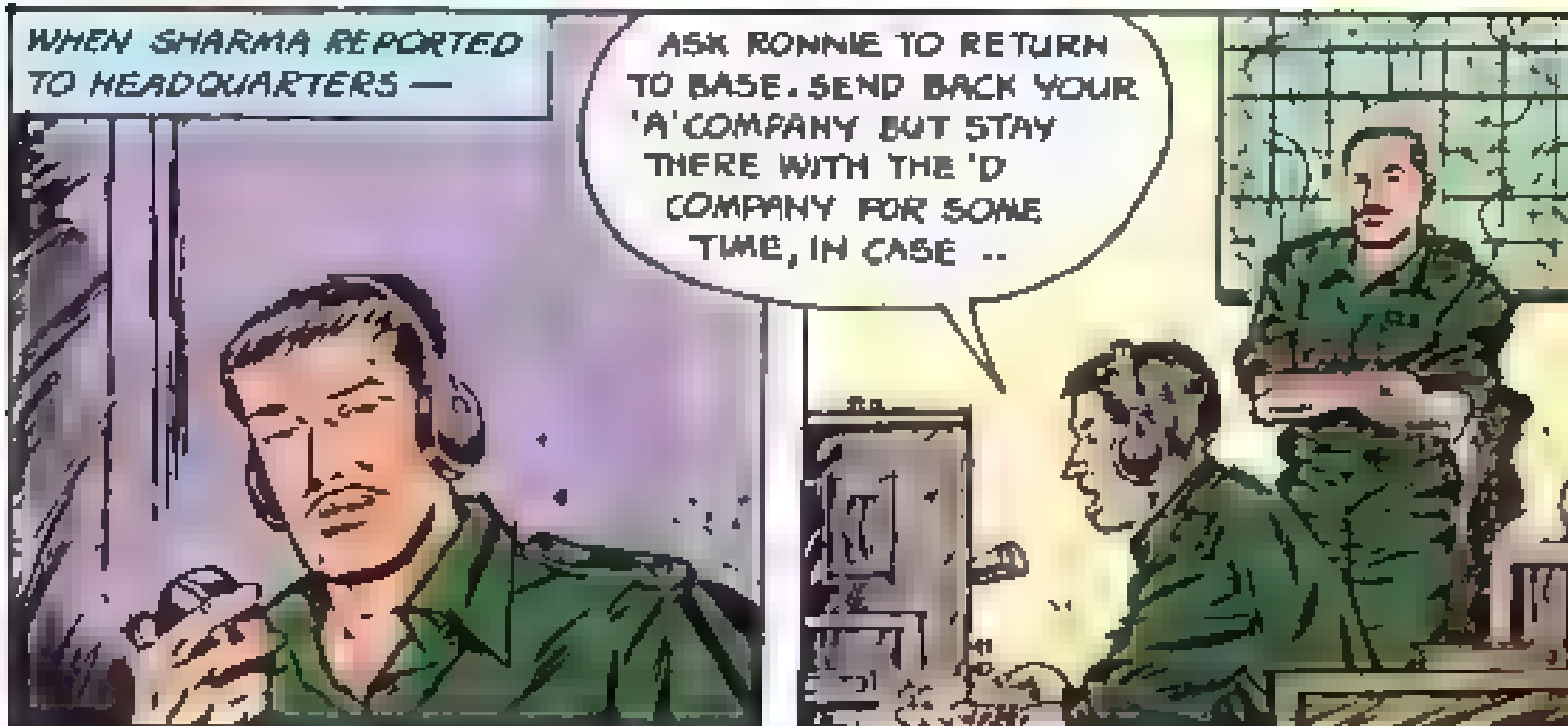
SEEN ANY
RAIDERS
YET, RONNIE?

NO SIGN OF THE
BLIGHTERS. THE PLACE
IS SWARMING WITH
REFUGEES. I SAW
SOME OF THEM
MAKING TEA NEAR
THE NULLAH
DOWN THERE.



WHEN SHARMA REPORTED
TO HEADQUARTERS —

ASK RONNIE TO RETURN
TO BASE. SEND BACK YOUR
'A' COMPANY BUT STAY
THERE WITH THE 'D'
COMPANY FOR SOME
TIME, IN CASE ..



JUST THEN A SHEPHERD CAME RUNNING TO THE HEADQUARTERS.



QABAILIES!
HUNDREDS
OF THEM!

WHERE DID YOU
SEE THEM?

THEY WERE PASSING
THROUGH GULMARG
LAST NIGHT AND ARE
MOVING FAST
TOWARDS BADGAM.



BADGAM!
GOOD
HEAVENS!

BRIG. SEN WAS INFORMED AND
HE TOOK IMMEDIATE ACTION.



THE AIR FORCE WILL
CARRY OUT STRAFING.
MEANWHILE, GET
SHARMA TO PUT UP
A STRONG DEFENCE.

AT BADGAM —




SIR, THOSE
REFUGEES NEAR
THE MULLAN ARE
CLIMBING TOWARDS
US.



PERHAPS THEY
ARE GOING TO
SRINAGAR.




THE RAIDERS FIRED RELENTLESSLY



DON'T SPARE A SINGLE LIFE. NO INDIAN JAWAN SHOULD ESCAPE ALIVE!

SHARMA'S POSITION BECAME DESPERATE. HE CALLED HEADQUARTERS.



THERE ARE ALMOST SEVEN HUNDRED RAIDERS AGAINST US. I NEED REINFORCEMENTS URGENTLY.

HOLD ON, SON THE KITES WILL BE SOON UP ON A STRAFING MISSION.

A FEW MINUTES LATER —



THE INDIAN AIR FORCE!



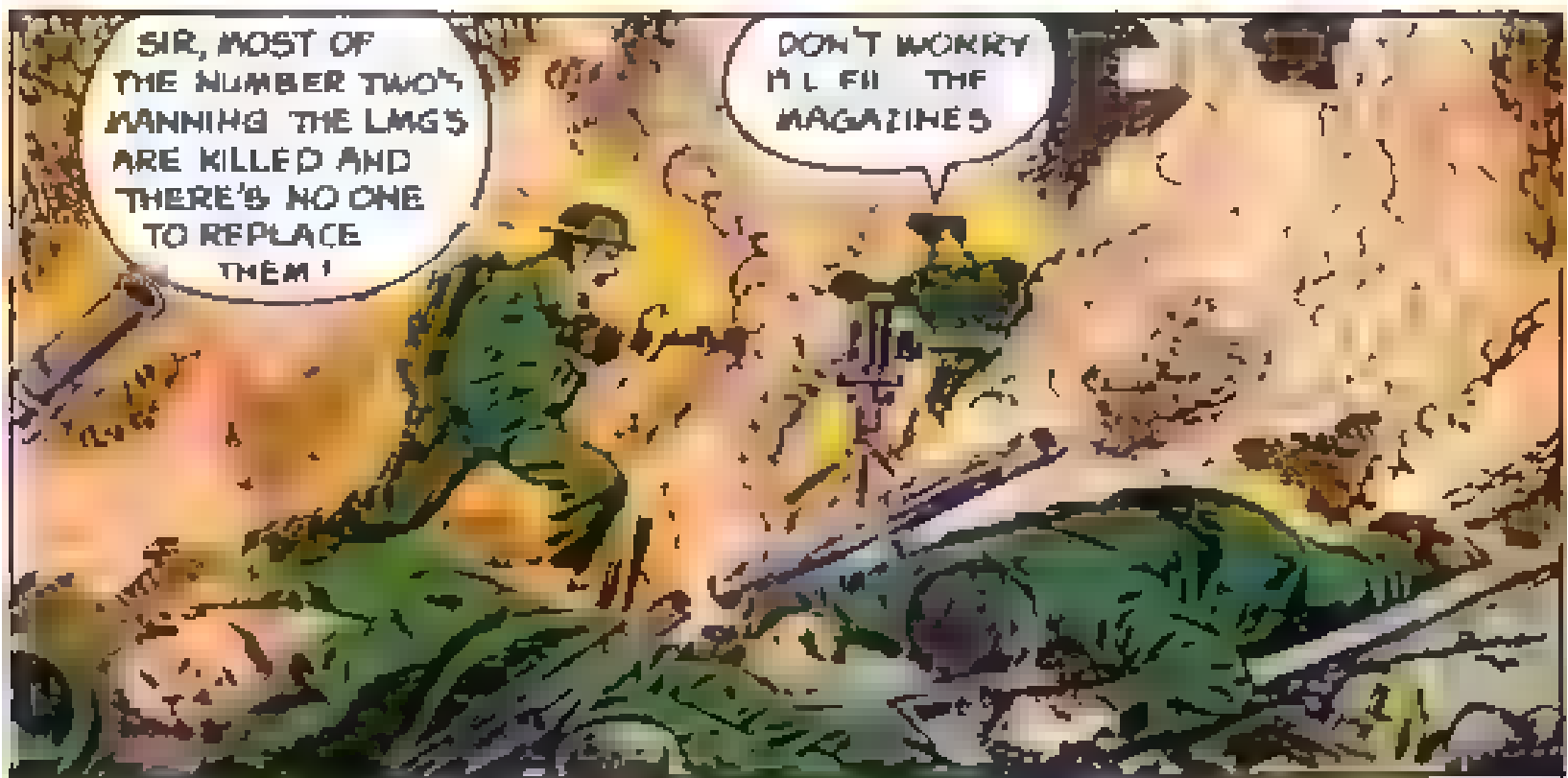
NOW IS THE TIME
TO STRENGTHEN OUR
POSITION! MOVE ALL
THE AMMUNITION TO
THE FORWARD SEC-
TION.



THE STRAFING PROVID-
ED BUT A SHORT
RESpite FOR SHARMA.
THE RAIDERS
RECOVERED

HELLO, BRIGADE
HQ AM FAST
LOSING MEN.
ENEMY PRESSURE
IS VERY HEAVY

KEEP IT UP,
SON REINFORCE-
MENTS ARE ON
THE WAY.



SIR, MOST OF
THE NUMBER TWO'S
MANNING THE LMG'S
ARE KILLED AND
THERE'S NO ONE
TO REPLACE
THEM!

DON'T WORRY
I'LL FILL THE
MAGAZINES

MAJOR SHARMA STARTED FILLING THE MAGAZINES FOR HIS GUNNERS.



SUDDENLY —

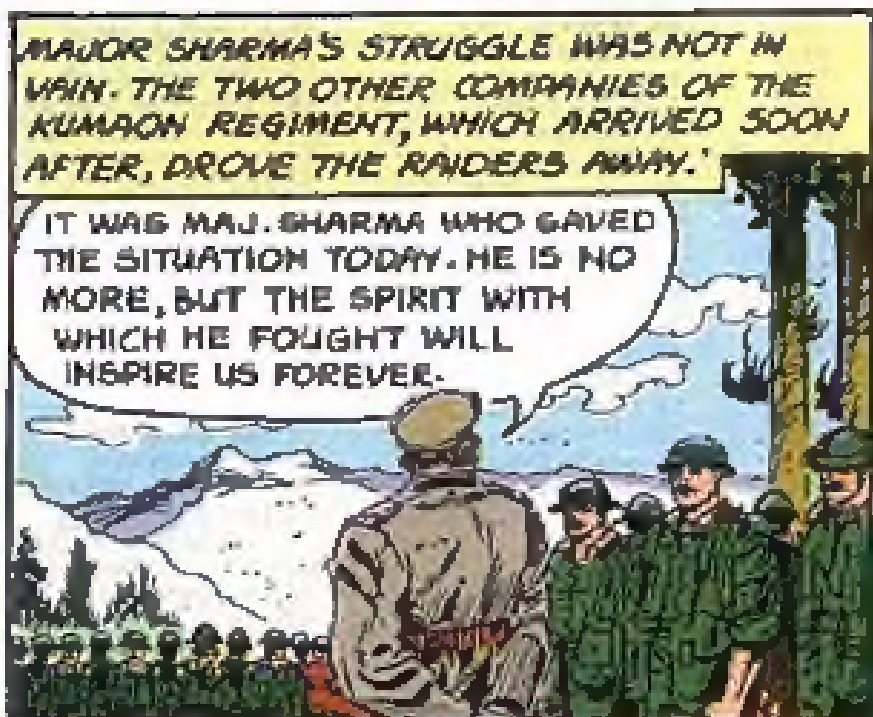


CARRY ON, BOYS!
YIELD NOT AN INCH
TO THE INVADERS!



MAJOR SHARMA'S STRUGGLE WAS NOT IN VAIN. THE TWO OTHER COMPANIES OF THE KUMAON REGIMENT, WHICH ARRIVED SOON AFTER, DROVE THE RAIDERS AWAY.

IT WAS MAJ. SHARMA WHO GAVE THE SITUATION TODAY. HE IS NO MORE, BUT THE SPIRIT WITH WHICH HE FOUGHT WILL INSPIRE US FOREVER.



BRIGADIER RAJINDER SINGH AND MAJOR SOMNATH SHARMA STOOD FIRM LIKE ROCKS AGAINST THE FURIOUS ONSLAUGHTS OF THE RAIDERS. THEY DIED AT THEIR POSTS IN THE SERVICE OF THEIR COUNTRY. THE GRATEFUL NATION AWARDED HER GALLANT SONS THE MAHAVIR CHAKRA (POSTHUMOUS) AND PARAMAVIR CHAKRA (POSTHUMOUS), RESPECTIVELY.



AMAR CHITRA KATHA

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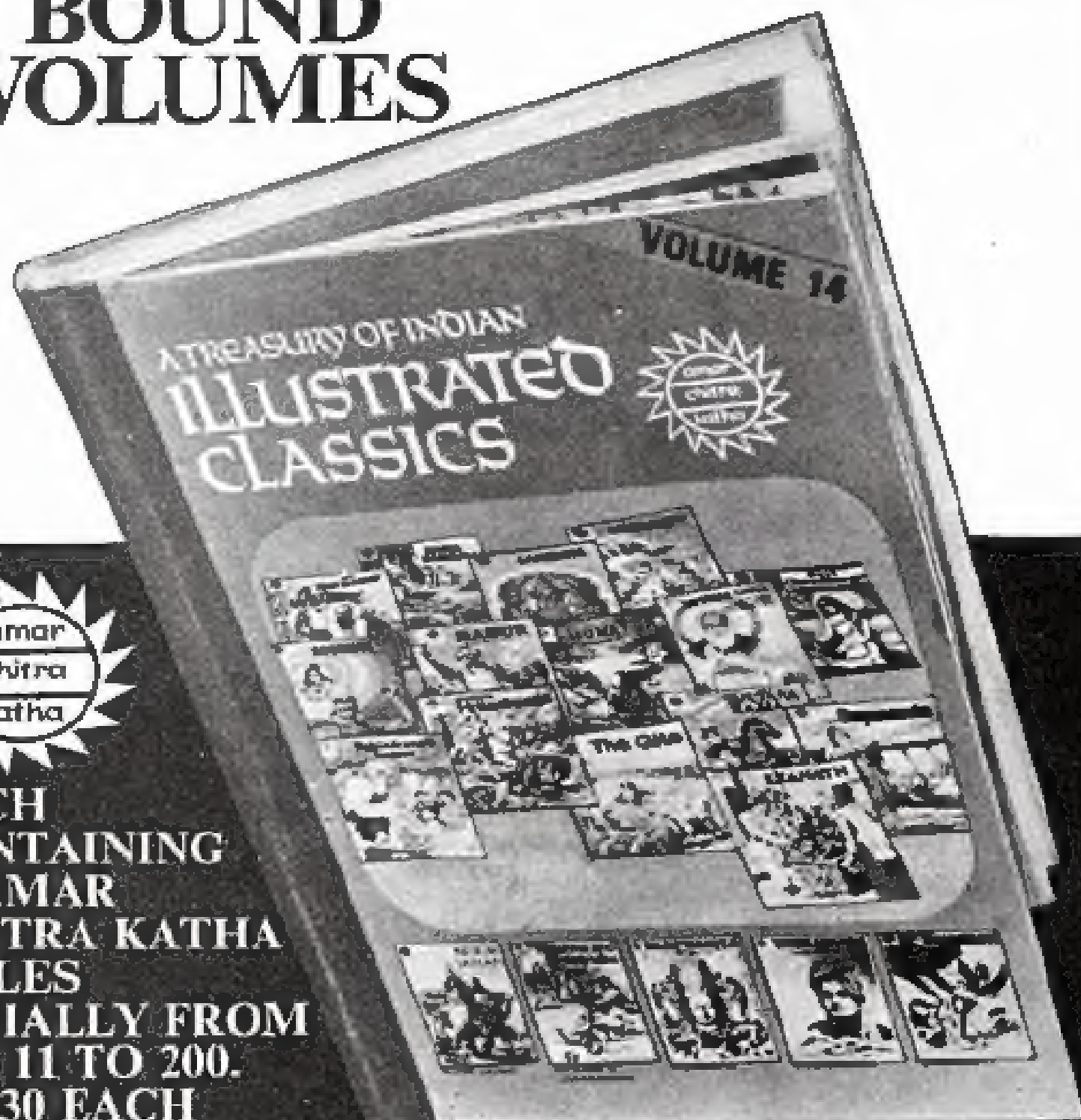
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